

the King. The Bishops, who had undertaken in Parliament to excommunicate her if she broke her oath, allowed her to return uncensured. Sudbury, whose special duty it was to denounce her, was not the man to take so bold a step of his own initiative; while Courtenay, whose conduct was never tinged with cowardice or irresolution, had probably not yet discovered how necessary it was to force the hand of his superior, if the Church was to take decided action. Sir Richard Stury, who had had the remarkable interview with the dying Prince, also returned to the King. Under such influences Edward declared the Good Parliament to be no Parliament.¹ As all its acts were cancelled, the Statute-book bears no trace of the greatest assembly of the period. These events demonstrate how powerless the Commons were to provide for the government of England, except during those months of each year in which they were actually sitting. It was necessary for them, if they were to impress their policy permanently on the administration, to be in alliance either with the King or with a combination of the greater lords. The Black Prince, if he had lived to be King, might have effected an alliance between the Crown and the Lower House; Henry the Fourth and his son actually achieved this settlement. But an unselfish and patriotic group of nobles, the Commons were never able to find. The Earls had gone with the tide of the Good Parliament, but now March alone stood firm in the day of trouble. Percy, Arundel, Stafford, all proved false or timid. It was the want of political principle on the part of the nobility that destroyed mediaeval Parliamentary government, and plunged England into the Wars of the Roses, where the power of the nobles perished as it deserved.

Although the Duke's friends were again in power, they still stood publicly convicted of corruption and misgovernment. As it was impossible to clear themselves of this charge, they not unnaturally sought to convict their enemies of similar misconduct, and so divide the opprobrium. It was

¹ *Chron. Ang.* > 103-5; Wals., i. 822.